

## Minnesota's Landowner Incentive Program Partners with Landowner and Others to Protect Rare Species and Improve Grazing on B-B Ranch

The B-B Ranch is a 3,500-acre, privately owned ranch that forms the core of a complex of state, county, federal and other public prairie lands covering approximately 10,000 acres in northern Clay County. The area, known as the 'Felton Prairie', is one of the most important dry prairie sites in Minnesota.

### Rare Species:

Felton prairie provides habitat for 6 rare butterfly species, 4 bird species, one small mammal species, and 12 listed plant species.



DNR Ecologist Nancy Sather, NRCS Grazing Specialist Mark Hayek, and B-B Ranch owner Brad Bjerken

### Rare Species and Working Lands:

The patch burn grazing system being implemented at B-B ranch is the first of its kind in Minnesota. This is a fire-induced, rotational grazing scheme that improves habitat for rare species through increased structural heterogeneity of native grasslands while providing economic returns for the landowner.

### Project Partners:

LIP Prairie Management Specialist, Shelley Becklund worked with the landowner, NRCS Grazing Specialist Mark Hayek, and Concordia College Asst. Professor Greg Hoch – formerly from the Konza Prairie Long Term Ecological Research Station– to develop the plan. As part of the plan, portions of the adjacent DNR Felton Wildlife Management Area are being fenced to initiate a 'grass banking' program with the B-B Ranch. This will allow the landowner to graze portions of the WMA in order to rest his pasturelands, allowing time for rejuvenation. In return, the grazing will benefit grassland renovation efforts on the WMA.

**Monitoring:** LIP will be conducting habitat and species monitoring to quantify benefits to listed species over time.



Dakota skipper  
(*Hesperia dacotae*)



Powesheik skipper  
(*Oarisma powesheik*)



Chestnut-collared longspur  
(*Calcarius ornatus*)



Marbled godwit  
(*Limosa fedoa*)



Greater prairie chicken  
(*Tympanuchus cupido*)

A few of the listed species identified in MN Wildlife Action Plan as Species In Greatest Conservation Need that will benefit from habitat enhancement on the B-B